



UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

Rector
Professor Alojzy Z. Nowak, Ph.D.

Warsaw, 7 December 2021

JMR-2082 /2021

Dear Sirs and Madams,

considering the growing COVID-19 pandemic on the territory of the Republic of Poland and subsequent inquiries as for the functioning of the University of Warsaw, I would like to explain the UW authorities' attitude towards the difficult situation we need to face. As it was stated in the spring of 2021, the University of Warsaw would resume the regular mode of study in the new academic year. The reasons for such a decision were duly explained and still remain valid.

Last spring everyone expected the information regarding the higher education institutions' choice on the form of teaching and learning: regular in-person or online, in the next academic year. Then, as the first Polish university, the University of Warsaw formally declared to emphasise the regular mode as a basic form of education. In consequence, our University's example was followed by other higher education institutions. Any possible change in the earlier decision by the University authorities is marked by an immense burden of the social responsibility for the academic community to reassure the best possible quality of the higher education in Poland. The online mode is not as effective as regular education, which is essential in the practical profile of the studies. The same problem can be seen in the academic profile studies, yet is not that significant. Any decision results in its further consequences. It is more than important when the decision refers to the mode of the University education. The responsibility for the online mode of education as a key education in the University, together with disadvantages of this decision, remains on each member of the academic community. We are fully aware of our obligations to our community.

From an economic point of view, the decision on the mode of education in 2021/2022 was taken as early as possible to help students from other parts of the country

determine whether they move to Warsaw, rent a flat or a room in the UW residence hall. Therefore, the fact that we are committed to our decision about the regular mode of study shows our profound concern that our community members could make their life decisions while trusting the declarations they receive.

Also, the survey conducted in September this year indicates the medium level of vaccination around 80 per cent in UW students and 90 per cent in UW academic teachers and administration staff. These results place the University of Warsaw on one of the safest places as for the coronavirus infection risk. As long as vaccination is not obligatory in our law system, the achieved results are seen as a great success. Thus, the national vaccination demographics should not be applied to the UW community. The UW vaccination level is a sheer proof that our community members are both ready and eager to return to the routines before COVID pandemic, e.g. a regular mode of study in the direct presence of the tutor and the participants.

The above view is also supported by UW students. The UW authorities discuss regularly the situation with the Student Council and the PhD Student Council. The students' representatives claim they prefer regular courses to the online ones. Together with the Student Council and PhD Student Council we monitor the situation and analyse our students' attitude to the health safety at UW. With the support of the faculty authorities we tend to ensure the best and the safest possible work conditions both for the UW academic teachers and the UW administration.

Due to the above mentioned points, as well as the tendency of the European universities to continue in-person education with the highest possible health standards, it is impossible to implement the online mode of education at the University of Warsaw. Fully conscious of the extraordinary situation (i.e. reported COVID cases), pursuant to the provisions of the Ordinance No. 140 of the Rector of the University of Warsaw dated 15 November 2021, the online mode of teaching and learning could be introduced for the period not longer than two weeks, whereas it could be prolonged for further two weeks under the occurred circumstances. In my opinion and the opinion of my colleagues, such precautions are completely adequate to assure the highest possible quality of education and, at the same time, the potential online mode of study in UW faculties.

Of course, in any significant deterioration of the COVID-19 pandemic that would influence the UW community and require a temporary full online mode of teaching and

learning, the UW authorities will undertake appropriate measures and respect any decision of the Polish Government in this case.

Facing the current coronavirus pandemic and the latest medical news, self-care and safety are the essential issues in the UW community and are easily applied during regular classes and work. Furthermore, I would like to emphasize how meaningful the COVID-19 vaccination is. The UW campaign called "Arm in Arm" aims at encouraging everyone to vaccinate against coronavirus. Personally, I do encourage everyone to receive a COVID-19 booster, and as such increase our health safety and win the pandemic fight.

RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW



Alojzy Z. Nowak